



CENTER OF VISION

Cover art by
Jessi Xiong, Animation '19

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MassArt Center of Vision

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ABOUT US

MassArt's Center of Vision serves as a forum for the MassArt student community. We publish a range of mediums, both written and visual, continuously online and monthly in print. Center of Vision is a place for our college community to explore its creative output, express diverging opinions, and discover what's happening on campus and beyond. We believe the sustainability of this publication comes from allowing each new generation of students to make their mark. As a place where every student can have their say, Center of Vision belongs wholly to the MassArt community.

New members are always welcome to join. Here are some positions we're currently looking for:

Online Editor	Columnists
Print Editor	Photojournalists
Art/Music Reviewer	Event Reporters

If any of these interest you, email us at snews@massart.edu and we can help get you started.

SUBMISSIONS

We are always looking for student artwork and writing to feature in our monthly issues and on our website. We accept all kinds of work, in any type of media. If you would like to submit your work, follow the submission guidelines on our website and send your images and writing to snews@massart.edu.

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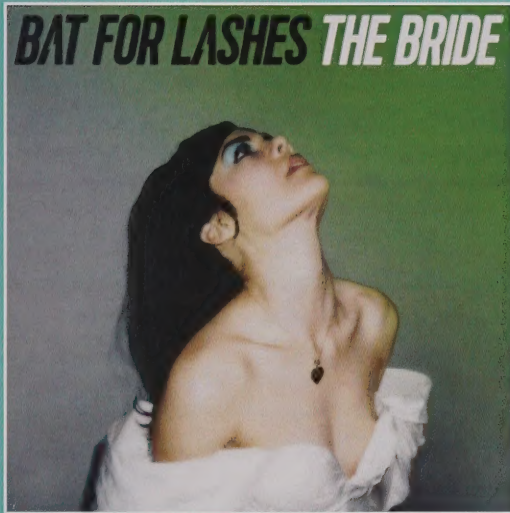


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SO LIKE: Music Reviews

by Clio Berta

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ECHO LABEL



NEW RELEASE

Bat For Lashes, *In God's House*

"In God's House", released this past March, is a single off of Natasha Khan's newest album, *The Bride*. Not yet released, the album will be the first Bat For Lashes project since *The Haunted Man*, released in 2012. Of course, this has caused a heightened sort of anticipation from fans. Alongside the single, Khan has published a short film, music video, and piece of writing in congruence with the album's release.

Produced by Khan, in collaboration with Dan Carey, Head, Simone Felice, and Ben Christophers, *The Bride* is one of the most collaborative, multi-dimensional Bat For Lashes projects to date. The album itself was inspired by *I Do*, a short film written and directed by Khan, scheduled to debut at NYC's Tribeca Film Festival this April. Together, the film and the album follows the story of a woman whose fiancé has been killed in a crash on the way to church for their wedding. Ahead of the album's release, Khan has scheduled a series of shows in churches.

Although Khan's work as Bat For Lashes has always explored the realm of spirituality, "In God's House" is one of the most haunting and in depth. In order to fully emerge herself in the complicated, multi-faceted relationship between self and religion, Khan creates a sort of character to deliver the work. By removing herself from the subject, she has created space to more fully delve into the spiritual concepts and ideas that intrigue her.

As a mixed media piece of work, *The Bride* project exemplifies the evolution of musicians and their increasingly multi-faceted role in the modern art world. Completely dedicated to her work, Khan has learned to disregard conventional formats and boundaries. In this way, she is paving the road for a more interrelated, multi-dimensional future for music.

THROWBACK

Vashti Bunyan, *Just Another Diamond Day*

Cult folk singer-songwriter Vashti Bunyan released her debut album, *Just Another Diamond Day*, in 1970. Soon after, she disappeared from the music world for more than thirty years. In 2005, she surprised many with the release of a second album, *Lookaftering*, featuring the likes of Joanna Newsom and Devendra Banhart. Quickly capturing the attention of music critics and long time fans, she became re-established as a prominent figure in the present indie folk scene. In 2014, she released her third and final album, *Heartleap*.

Her wavering presence in the music world is reminiscent of the nature of her compositions. Thoughtfully timid, Bunyan seems to release work only when she feels she has something important to say. "Winter Is Blue", a bonus track off of *Just Another Diamond Day*, features Bunyan describing the varying qualities of winter, slowly and matter-of-factly. Half singing, half whispering, her voice floats between registers, disregarding the notion of "singing from your diaphragm." This non-committal singing style, while sometimes limiting, leaves room for an unusual, sort of poignant expressiveness. The vulnerable, sincere quality of Bunyan's work separates her from her musical peers and collaborators. Perfect for quiet, slow-moving spring days, may *Just Another Diamond Day* help lift you out of winter.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PHILIPS RECORDS

Creative COUNTERPOINTS

A symposium of identity and purpose through women's voices

by Julie Cangrand

This event was the first of this magnitude organized at MassArt by Marika Prezioso, Assistant Professor in the Department of Liberal Arts. The event's brochure explains that "the 'counterpoint' in the title of the symposium refers to the many intersections and exchanges that constitute women's identities and experiences, as well as the dynamics at play in the creative process." Six women, mostly second-generation immigrants, including two MassArt graduate students, composed the panel. "The truth is that all immigrant are artists" said Prezioso, quoting Edwidge Danticat, "because they carry the necessity of re-creating their entire life each time." "And necessity is the fairy godmother of invention", replied Maria Popova, the founder of the blog *Brain Pickings*. This first exchange was enough for me to get excited about what was coming next. As a French woman coming from living in Colombia and having recently settled in the U.S., I was eager to embrace those unknown point of views and unpredictable answers. The symposium didn't let me down.

Beyond the topics of *Women*, *Difference*, and *The Arts*, the three ideas that weaved together the afternoon were empathy, differentiation, and making space. On empathy, Professor Gunta Kaza shared her study about apathy, boredom and depression, embodied in her collection of tea cloths from caregivers from all over the world. Her talk examined the inconvenience of experiencing empathy, mainly because it's difficult to attain – it demands a choice to be made and a time commitment. On differentiation, Dr. Sharon Heijin Lee presented her study on the "geopolitics of beauty", and the plastic surgery phenomenon taking place in her motherland of South Korea, in which Asian women try to emulate white facial features. By showing the work of female digital activist Kate HERS RHEE, Lee demonstrates the importance of building counter-narratives, as "the whiteness argument too often becomes the end of the story." Instead, she strives to experience the

inconvenience of empathy to be able to deeply understand the pressures behind the current Asian cult of beauty. Dr. Rachel Mordecai was another speaker who shared great lessons about differentiation, vulnerability and creativity as she opened up about her inner conflict as an English literature scholar who loves reading Caribbean romance literature. Making space was the core concept in Christina Huilang Wang's talk, as she tries to look at the world with "an unclouded and critical eye." Her work analyses the connection between intimacy and oppression, and advocates for an economy of compassion that prevents any concentration of power. Christina's ambition is to make enough space so that any binary points of view on gender issues become insignificant. Anne Sisto, as a dynamic media artist, also explores this idea of making space, and creating empathy to be able to speak about feminism in the modern age. She uses humor in her installations as a medium to stand up for female representation in the advertising and media industry.

Last but not least, the most anticipated speaker was Maria Popova, the founder of the blog *Brain Pickings*. Popova was born in 1984 in Bulgaria, and came to the U.S. under the promise of its liberal education. She created her blog while still an undergraduate student looking for more answers. "Creativity is not about finding the best examples in your field of knowledge but combining different sources indiscriminately," she said. "Composing life is the ultimate project of creativity."

She started writing about what she was reading, and sent a weekly email to her colleagues from the advertising agency where she was working as a source of creativity and inspiration for their work. Today, after ten years of daily dedication, her website reaches seven million visitors a month. She told the story of a young woman who was very anxious because she had been keeping a blog that she was very passionate about, but only had 7 followers. Popova asked the young woman how long she had the

"Composing life is the ultimate project of creativity."

- Maria Popova

Audience members
performing with
Kaza's tea cloths ▶



blog for. It had only been three weeks. “OK, let’s talk again in three years,” Popova replied. “You have to think long term, not buying into the ‘culture of busy’ and find ways to do something that comes out of your own values,” she explained. It’s how *Brain Pickings* started, as a by-product. She didn’t make a business plan back then, and she still doesn’t have one. Her experience is what she agrees to attend to, paraphrasing William James. “Creativity comes out of what you choose to experience, from the outer, but more importantly, from your inner world.”

As a student, Popova worked as an advertising representative for a newspaper, and she was so good at her job that she even won an award. It’s how she learned that “if the world tells you you’re good at something, it doesn’t mean it’s your purpose. You have to know the difference between what you’re good at and what makes you feel good.” The moderator asked her for some advice for young artists: “to make the inner and conscious choice of actively denying cynicism, because it only ends up creating a real sense of disempowerment.” According to her, the creative act is an act of optimism; it means that we have something to contribute to the world. “Hope is the counterpoint” to the modern world. “Find people who magnify your spirit, not diminish it,” she said. “Create unburdened space.”

Popova’s talk was full of meaningful advice about what it is to live a meaningful life. According to the psychoanalyst Irvin Yalom, there are four major existential concerns in the inner life of every human being: death, meaning in life, isolation, and freedom. Popova was one of the first voices that creatively addressed this major topic by curating literature as a material for inspiration. In 2012, she was named number 51 of the 100 most creative people in business by *Fast Company Magazine*. She confessed she still doesn’t get it; hers is not a business, since she lives off donations from her audience.

In my opinion, I think a personal brand is still a business, especially in this new economy where we are all able to broadcast our own voices, and where wellness and mindfulness are our new religions. I’m not being cynical. Well, I might have felt a little self-defensive at first, but as the afternoon went on, I became sincerely moved by all those female voices. At the end of the day, Prezioso pointed out that she wasn’t aware that those voices existed at MassArt. I didn’t either. I hope this is how community begins, by sharing personal stories, and building emotional memories together.



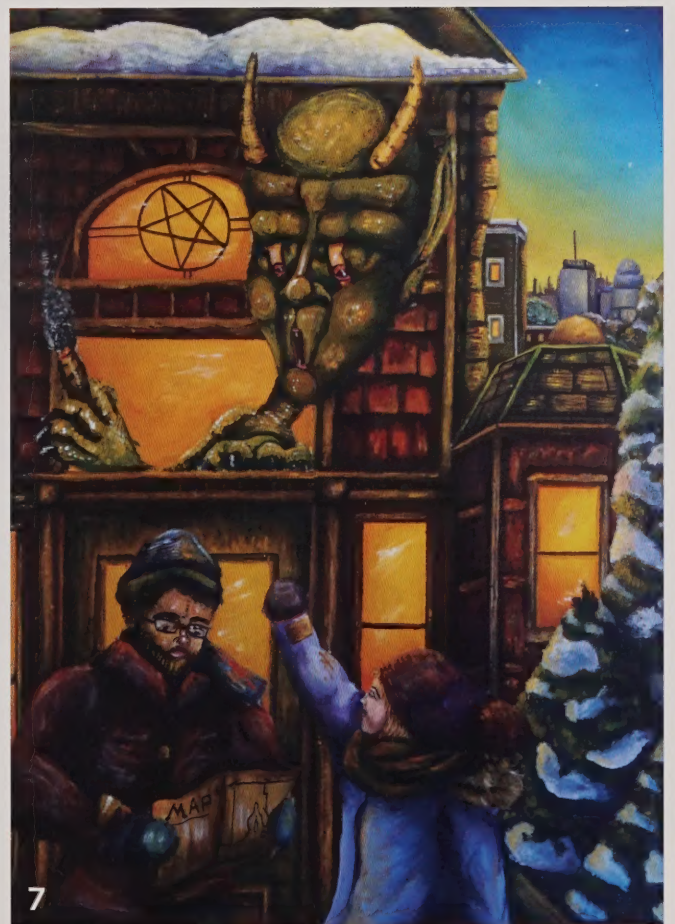
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from left to right:

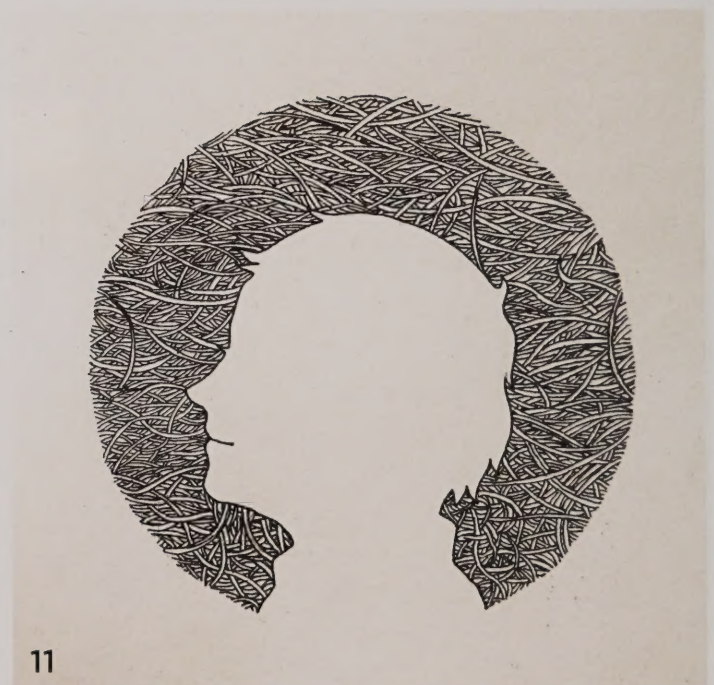
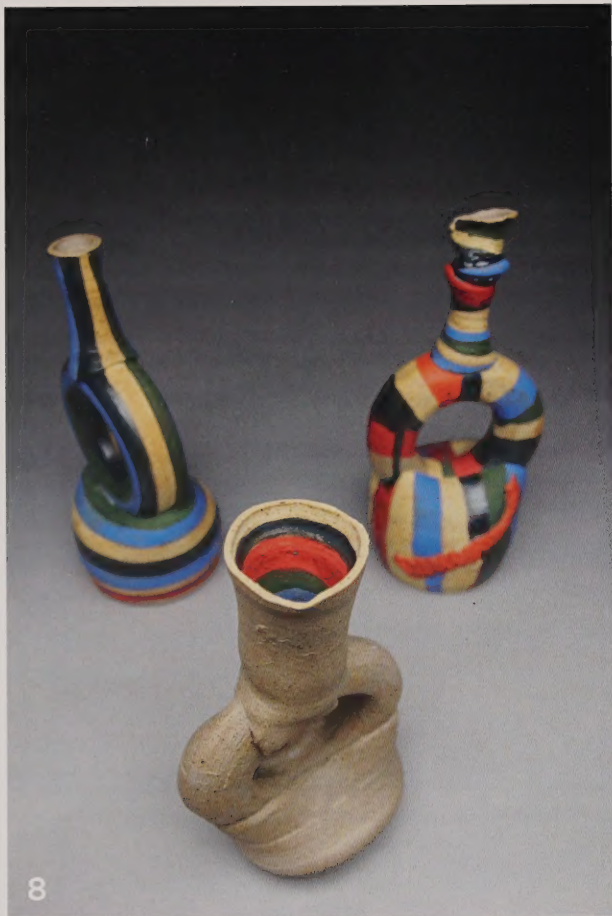
Maria Popova,
Marika Prezioso,
Anne Sisto,
Sharon Heijin Lee,
Rachel Mordecai,
Christina Huilang Wang,
Gunta Kaza.

THE GALLERY

Student Work







Wanna see your art here too?

Email your work to snews@massart.edu and include your name, major, year of graduation, and the title of your piece.



1 "Cool Cats", Sarina Sherzai, Illustration '17 2 "The Fish", Jenny Andress, Illustration '17 3 "Mirror Neurons", Emily White, SIM '18 4 "Crimp Glocktail", Jillian Carlock, Painting '17 5 "Self-Portrait Behind Screen", Maxwell Labelle, Photo '19 6 "Role Rigidity", Lauren Alindogan, Ceramics '16 7 "The Devil's Doorstep", John Rego, Illustration '18 8 "Medicine Bottles 1, 2, and 3", Rachel Snow, SIM/Ceramics '17 9 "Underwater Blues", Maureen McAfee, Illustration '19 10 "To the Nines", Lauren Madigan, Illustration '18 11 "I am a strange loop", Shubhika Malara, Fine Arts, '17 12 "Untitled", Amy Fink, Photo '18 13 "Anamorphic Tape Illusions Installation", Tony Pham, Graphic Design '19 14 "Faux Friendships", Connor Dunham, SIM '19

BEHIND THE SCENES: Zootopia

Animation presentation with Disney Artist Nick Orsi

by Dylan McCusker

We arrived at Northeastern University to find a gaggle of rabbit and fox-eared students hovering around the entrance to the lecture hall. We received our cardboard ears promptly and waited for the presentation on the making of the Disney film *Zootopia* to begin. I was actually quite excited to hear this character artist talk about his craft and the animation, despite being relatively uninterested in the film itself. I'd seen the trailers and clips, and knew the gist of what it was about, as did, I assume, most of the audience of students who had gathered to hear the artist talk.

Actually, that is what really bothered me most about the whole presentation. I wanted to hear the artist discuss the how the film was made. Instead, the first half hour of this hour-long presentation consisted of the artist dryly describing the basic plot of the film thoroughly enough to fill up the time, yet vaguely enough to not spoil anything from it. Interspersed throughout this initial rundown were clips, some of which had already been out on the Internet for a while as sneak peeks. This upset me; instead of an artist talk it appeared Disney was just giving us an extended commercial to try and get us to go see the movie. Once the presenter finally finished the summary, he got a bit into the actual making of the film, specifically the character creation and art, as that was his specialty.

He discussed the design of specific characters, but also how the general aesthetic of all of the animals in movie was developed. Orsi described how a lot of the hardest work was done studying how they could get the characters to do all of the little everyday things us humans do in order to make them seem more relatable. While ensuring this they also had to maintain the unique traits that define each species. For instance, the giraffes were hard to anthropomorphize and make bipedal, simply due to their extreme proportions and very specific gait. If they didn't implement their unique manner of walking into a bipedal movement, then they lose that little bit of animal inside the character that prevents them from just being humans with giraffe bodies. Aside from the giraffes and a few other animals, Orsi mentioned that once they defined a solid structure and way of making the animals bipedal, they could simply apply that formula to most of the animal species, and make modifications on a case-by-case basis.

As he was a 2D artist working on a 3D-animated film, it was interesting to hear about the process of the translation between the two modes of thinking. He described designing 3-dimensional characters in a 2-dimensional medium like designing a toy. It has to have more volume and depth, to emphasize the aspects that would be seen when they are made 3D. He said he had to make sure they were interesting



IMAGES COURTESY OF WALT DISNEY ANIMATION

on all sides, because once in this 3-dimensional world the characters will be seen from every angle. It was tough because he couldn't use some of the cheats one can use when designing characters for a 2D film or book. He also mentioned that part of the reason there are only mammals in the movie and no other class of animal was because they really wanted to animate fur, and showcase the new techniques and technology that allowed for it.

The Q&A afterward was probably the best and most informational part. He got to answer a lot of good questions and go a bit more in-depth than the pre-written part of the presentation. It allowed him to talk a bit about the industry and what it is like to work at Disney also. Orsi discussed how the artists are all in a big pool, as are the directors and their respective films. The artists are pulled by a manager to be put on different projects based on how well they think their styles would intermingle, and based on the specific requests of the directors. It was almost as if the directors were like clients that the artists worked for during a specific project. Making such a large budget movie with so many people is a long and complicated endeavor, apparently. The

process began 5 years ago, and the final story change came about only 6 months before *Zootopia* was released in theaters!

We left the presentation pretty happy, despite the unnecessary half hour intro. The self-proclaimed "peon" Nick Orsi did a great job answering everybody's questions and presenting the process of character design. Apparently, the fox character Nick Wilde, voiced by Jason Bateman, was originally named Jack, but the name had to be changed. They picked the new name "Nick" after Nick Orsi himself. Pretty cool to be immortalized forever in the form of an anthropomorphic fox!

CHECK IT OUT!

A full movie review of *Zootopia* is available on our website at massartstudentnews.com



Original concept art by Nick Orsi.

See more of his work at nicholasorsi.tumblr.com

